

“Where is the project management in Legal Project Management?” A Community Debate

Synopsis of #LPMHQ chat from Wednesday, February 6, 2019



QUOTE OF THE MEETING

"After nearly a decade, LPM gurus and law firms claiming to adopt LPM continue to sweep >80 years of PM experience and tools under the rug. Using tired claims of lawyer exceptionalism, they sweep the PMBOK under the rug and ladle out weak-sauce substitutes."



One view, defining LPM as “the application of widely accepted project management standards, such as those promulgated by the PMI, to legal matters”, maintained that lawyers don’t adhere strictly enough to the standards and tools of the PMBOK and often circumvent LPM by claiming “lawyer exceptionalism”.

The other view maintained that LPM must be fluid and take the culture of the organization into consideration. “PM is like a toolbox, use the tools that are most useful for a particular project.” “It is not one size fits all”. This group opined that the PMBOK is often overkill and doesn’t say what the “standard” is, but the first group said that many firms that haven’t supported true LPM implementation aren’t aware of the tools at their disposal.

Agreement was had in Firms building LPM programs with a formal set of standards and a core model to associates and/or practice-group level PMOs being helpful. But it is feared that unless LPMs are empowered by Firm leadership, no matter how well educated on the resources at their disposal, they will eventually fall in line with the culture.

SUMMARY

This was a particularly lively exchange with two distinct sides, both wishing the chat were longer than 30 minutes.

FURTHER QUESTIONS RAISED:

What is the difference between IT PMO and the PMO in Legal? Are there many lawyers managing their matters like a PM without knowing that they are doing so? How might we be able to identify this? How many LPMs are PMs first? Are we expecting lawyers to be masters of project management, or treat them like a member on a team led by a PM?